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BOOK REVIEWS.

THE VALUE AND DESTINY OF THE INDIVIDUAL. The Gifford Lectures for 1912, delivered in Edinburgh University. By Bernard Bosanquet, LL.D., D.C.L. London: Macmillan & Co., 1913. Pp. xviii, 331.

This volume is a continuation of "The Principle of Individuality and Value," which was reviewed in this JOURNAL in July, 1912. As in the case of that volume, it seems hardly necessary to give any summary of its contents. There is not only a very full analytical table of contents at the beginning and a serviceable index at the end, but also extensive abstracts of each of the lectures; and as the interest of the work lies mainly in the rich concrete material by which this outline is filled in, a mere synopsis of the line of argument would be practically worthless. It may be more to the purpose to try to give an account of the general aim of the undertaking. The present volume makes this a good deal clearer to me, and will probably do so to other readers as well, than it was when only the first series of lectures was accessible. The work is not to be taken primarily as a treatise on metaphysics, like "Appearance and Reality." The metaphysical position is to all intents assumed at the outset, and the object is rather to bring out the bearings of that position on the larger problems of human life. Dr. Bosanquet disclaims any attempt to furnish us with a Theodicée. He does not seek to justify the ways of God to man. One might almost say that what he gives us is rather an Anthropodicée,—a justification of the ways of man to God. In other words, he seeks to show how the main facts of human life lead to the practical recognition of the Absolute. His treatise might be regarded as an application of Goethe's maxim:

Willst du ins Unendliche schreiten?
Geh' nur im Endlichen nach allen Seiten.

And certainly he does carry this out very fully. His general contention is that all the larger aspects of human life can only be properly interpreted from the point of view of self-transcendence; and that the effort after such self-transcendence finds

its only ultimate satisfaction in self-identification with the whole.

It is obvious that such a contention has the utmost interest from the point of view of ethics. What is commonly called idealistic ethics has generally insisted strongly, under the influence of Green, on the conception of self-realization. Dr. Bosanquet does not really object to this; but it is his aim rather to urge that the realization of the self involves the complete transcendence of its narrow individuality (which, of course, Green also held). It is from this point of view that all the leading problems of life are here dealt with; and the reader who has once grasped this fundamental conception will have little difficulty in following and appreciating its application in detail.

The problems that are dealt with in the present volume are, to a large extent, those that are commonly summed up by means of the terms, God, Freedom, and Immortality; but the way in which these conceptions are regarded is very different from that which might be expected by any reader who has not placed himself at the central point of view. The question about God, for instance, is not whether God exists, or how God should properly be conceived, but rather what is the part that the conception of God plays in the emancipation of man from his narrow self-centered existence. And it is in a similar way that the other problems are discussed. A few words on the treatment of each of these problems may perhaps be useful.

For the right understanding of Dr. Bosanquet's references to the conception of God, it is necessary to bear in mind that he distinguishes between God (as the object of religious devotion) and the Absolute, which many philosophers have identified with God (see p. 249). God is to be regarded as an imaginative presentation of the Absolute, and consequently as containing only a limited 'degree of Reality.' It may be doubted whether this is quite satisfactory. No doubt, in all religions the object of devotion may be said to be something through which a certain self-transcendence is achieved; and in this sense it is suggested that even a dog may be religious (p. 236). But in the lower forms of religion it can hardly be said that the object of worship is to be identified with the Absolute at all; whereas in the higher religions it tends to become increasingly so identified; so that it may be doubted whether it is ultimately possible to draw any distinction between them. No doubt, in

all religions the emphasis falls on emotion and action, rather than on knowledge; and hence it may be said that its object is, in general, not adequately apprehended. But I think Dr. Bosanquet would allow that a purely intellectual apprehension of such an object (if that means an apprehension in which the element of value is omitted) would also be inadequate. If this is allowed, the question suggests itself whether the Absolute is such as to be fitted to be the object of religious devotion. Some would be inclined to urge that for this purpose personality and goodness must be ascribed to it. Now Dr. Bosanquet, though he describes the Absolute as a perfect individual, is inclined to deny goodness and to ascribe to it (as Herbert Spencer did, but with fuller explanations than Spencer gave) perfection as transcending personality. The distinction between goodness and perfection is somewhat finely drawn; though no doubt it can easily be argued that *moral* goodness, at least in the narrower acceptation of the term, could hardly be ascribed to the Absolute. The exact meaning of the transcendence of personality seems also to require fuller treatment than is here given to it. But I suppose this is one of those metaphysical points on which it would not be quite fair to expect a full discussion in a work that is not primarily metaphysical.

The treatment of freedom is subtle and, I am inclined to think, adequate. It is dealt with under the heading, "The Miracle of Will" (Lecture IV); and the main contention may be regarded as an expansion of the saying of Goethe: "Man alone can perform the impossible: he distinguishes, chooses, and judges." Dr. Bosanquet recognizes, however, that man does at some points come up against what is genuinely impossible; and then he can only realize his freedom by the supreme miracle of placing himself at the standpoint of the whole. I doubt whether there is any treatment of the subject of freedom which more happily maintains the balance between the recognition of the conditions by which man is limited and the assertion of the infinite element in his nature by which he is enabled to transcend these limits. The recognition of this infinite element, however, naturally leads on to the consideration of immortality.

Many readers may be apt to think his treatment of this subject unsatisfactory. There has been a great revival of the doctrine of 'personal immortality' in recent times; and some of

the upholders of this doctrine will be apt to regard his attitude towards it as unsympathetic. Yet he does not ignore it or even altogether set it aside. The truth rather is that, from Dr. Bosanquet's point of view, it is of only subordinate interest. What he seeks to urge is that the true realization of man is not to be found in the continuance of his narrow individuality, but in its transcendence. How far such transcendence involves the continuity of the finite self is a secondary question. The main thing is rather to see that there are many ways in which what is best in the life of the individual may be regarded as having a certain eternity and as persisting in time far beyond the limits of his physical existence. All that Dr. Bosanquet says on this subject is put extremely well and carries full conviction. He notices the doctrine of reincarnation, which many regard as the only tenable form of personal immortality; but on the whole he seems inclined to set it aside on the ground of the impossibility of showing any real sense in which identity can be established when there is no consciousness of it (p. 269). I suppose the supporters of the theory will not feel such an objection to be fatal. It may be urged that, even in the case of the normal life of the individual, certain periods are apt to become very largely dissociated from others, while yet their essential continuity may afterwards be seen. An old man sometimes recovers experiences of his youth which in middle life had been forgotten or disregarded. Some of the more philosophical supporters of the doctrine of reincarnation have thought that the relation between successive embodiments might be conceived in a similar way. But Dr. Bosanquet's main point, as I understand him, is that the continuity of individual lives is not fundamentally important. He quotes with approval the saying of Nettleship, that death 'does not count.'

I may now refer to what appears to me to be the most serious defect in Dr. Bosanquet's general view of life. In the review of his previous volume, I noted that it seemed difficult to give any satisfactory account of progress from his point of view, and ventured to hope that in the succeeding volume this difficulty might be met. To a certain extent I think it is met. The conception of the finite self as continually seeking self-transcendence and finding it more and more, does certainly involve progress. But the recognition of the reality of such

progress is frustrated by the conception of the unreality of time. Sometimes Dr. Bosanquet appears to doubt whether there is really any progress at all (see especially pp. 310 and 313). He emphasizes the fact that there is always loss as well as gain in any advance that is made, and seems almost inclined to believe that every stage of existence is intrinsically just as good as any other, except (surely a rather weighty *except*) in so far as it implies an increasing insight into the value of what has gone before. It seems to me that if this view were definitely pressed, it would be fatal to that strenuousness of human effort which Dr. Bosanquet so keenly appreciates and so fully illustrates in his own many-sided activities. It is no doubt true that there is usually loss as well as gain; but can it be seriously maintained that the two sides are generally equal? Is it not even true that what is lost tends in many cases to be recovered? Our modern civilizations, for instance, have no doubt lost many of the valuable features that belonged to the civilizations of Greece and other older nations. But are we not beginning to appreciate, and through appreciation to recover, some of these excellent features? Even in the individual life do we not know many people in middle life who have been able to recover something of the freshness and elasticity of youth? I am disposed even to demur a little to the rather gloomy view that Dr. Bosanquet is inclined to take of the loss that occurs in old age. Has he forgotten Rabbi Ben Ezra?

Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be —

The last of life for which the first was made.

What of Cephalus in Plato's *Republic*? Or of such an old age as that of Goethe? Such cases are no doubt exceptional; but at least they suggest fine possibilities. But the truth is, I think, that Dr. Bosanquet has something almost like contempt for time. Reality, he thinks, must be timeless; and consequently we cannot recognize any real growth, any truly 'creative evolution.' Hence he objects (p. 326) to Edward Caird's conception of an 'ultimate triumph' of good. At best he will only allow of a 'relative triumph,' and even that somewhat grudgingly. It is difficult to see how this is to be reconciled with the 'perfection' of the universe, or with the fact that life presents itself to us as a constant struggle after better things. I do not see why

he should seek to deprive the Cosmos of any of its features. It seems of course obvious enough, as he urges, that good implies evil as its correlative. All that he says on this subject is excellent; and perhaps no one has ever more impressively brought out 'the soul of goodness in things evil.' Good implies evil, as beauty implies ugliness; but does this fact make it impossible to think of a whole which is perfectly good or beautiful, the ugliness or evil being completely subordinated to the significance of the whole? And may it not be the case that such a whole can only be realized through a process of gradual growth? I should have thought that Dr. Bosanquet might have more explicitly adopted the view (which was, I believe, that of Caird) that there is but one reality,—the Absolute Life (*αὐτὸν δὲ οὐτι ζῶν*) working itself out through a time-process, and reaching an end in which its significance is made clear. Of course there are difficulties in such a view; but I should have thought that Dr. Bosanquet could have overcome them. It is surely necessary to maintain such a view if perfection is to be seriously affirmed at all.

He might very well retort, however, that this would have been to set forth such a Theodicée as he repudiates. Should we not be content with his more modest Anthropodicée? Well, I am doubtful whether 'in the end' (to use one of his favorite phrases) the two things can really be separated; but on the whole I am satisfied, and more than satisfied, with what he has given. His work is certainly a profound piece of philosophical discussion, of the most fascinating interest to all who care for the larger problems of life. It is, in every way, worthy of his great reputation, which it will rightly enhance. And I feel that this is a very inadequate review of it. I can only add,—*Read the book.* There is much more in it than I have been able to indicate. It is perhaps the ripest fruit of the idealistic development in England—at least from the point of view of the interpretation of human life.

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